



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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FORMER DIRECTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF TRIBAL DAYCARE FUNDS

PHOENIX – The former director of the White Mountain Apache Tribe's Child Care and Development Services pleaded guilty here today in federal court to Theft Concerning Programs Receiving Federal Funds.

Sadie Thomas-Burnette, 52, an enrolled member of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, admitted that between April 2001 and February 2003, while serving as director of all of the children's programs on the White Mountain Apache Reservation, she unlawfully transferred \$141,979 from a tribal day care center bank account into two personal accounts held in the names of Thomas-Burnette and two family members.

U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton said "It is tragic when a person steals funds intended to benefit children and to ease the burden on parents in raising their children."

A conviction for Theft Concerning Programs Receiving Federal Funds carries a maximum penalty of ten years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. Thomas-Burnette will also be ordered to pay restitution to the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Sentencing is set for August 28, 2006, before U.S. District Judge Earl H. Carroll.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the FBI and the Navajo County Sheriff's Office. White Mountain Apache Tribal Police aided in the investigation. The prosecution is being handled by Howard D. Sukenic and Frank T. Galati, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-1354 PCT-EHC
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